ROBERT KANIGHER & NEAL ADAMS

DEADMAN™

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NO. 6

YOU HAVE FAILED TO KILL *DEADMAN*, HOOK! THE PENALTY FOR FAILURE IS... *DEATH!*

NO! YOU CAN'T KILL HIM! THE HOOK IS MINE!

DEADMAN

TO HAUNT A KILLER

LISTEN TO ME! DON'T WALK RIGHT PAST ME LIKE I'M A SLICE OF WIND!

I'M

ONCE I WAS JUST LIKE YOU!

ROBERT KANIGHER: STORY

NEAL ADAMS: ART

WHAT IS IT WITH THE WORLD? DOES EVERYTHING COME IN TWOS? AM I THE ONLY ONE THAT'S WANDERING UP AND DOWN EVERY STREET LIKE A SHADOW LOOKIN' FOR A PLACE TO REST?

I MAY BE A DEAD-MAN, BUT I'M CURSED WITH MEMORIES OF THE REAL WORLD! I MISS FEELING THE RAIN ON MY FACE, FEELING TIRED AND NEEDING SLEEP AND... FEELING WHAT IT'S LIKE TO EAT... TO HAVE THE JUICE OF A STEAK TRICKLE DOWN MY THROAT LIKE A GOOD WINE!..

TODAY'S SPECIAL

...AND TO SMILE... TO LAUGH! BUT HAPPINESS NEEDS TO BE SHARED!

AGGGG... THIS FEELING IS KILLING ME... AND ISN'T THAT A LAUGH!

CIRCUS

GOTTA GET MY MIND OFF IT... HEY, A CIRCUS... JUST WHAT I NEED!

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN... THERE'S ONE PLACE HILL'S CIRCUS NEVER GOT TO PLAY... THINK I'LL GO IN...

LADIEZZ AND GENTLEMEN... PRESENTING THE GREATEST AERIALISTS OF OUR TIME... THE DEATH-DEFYING ZORIASTORS!

THE DEATH-DEFYING DEADMAN... THEY USED TO SAY... UNTIL I DEFIED IT ONCE TOO OFTEN...

OOOO, PHIL! THEY SAY THIS IS JUST ABOUT THE BEST AERIALIST ACT *EVER!*

JUST ABOUT, BABY... BUT NOT THE BEST! THE BEST WAS ME... DEADMAN! THOSE TRAPEZE BARS WERE MY FRIENDS... THEY CAME ALIVE IN MY HANDS! THE FREE AIR WAS MY NATURAL ELEMENT!

THE PROGRAM SAYS THEY LEARNED THEIR BEST STUNTS FROM AN AERIALIST CALLED DEADMAN, WHO WAS SHOT ONE DAY DURING HIS ACT! HUMPH...WONDER HOW THAT HAPPENED?

HOW DID IT HAPPEN? WITH THE CRACK OF A RIFLE AND A BURNING FIRE IN MY CHEST!

ARGHH! I'VE BEEN SHOT!

"I DIED BUT I DIDN'T DIE! I WALKED AWAY FROM MY BODY..."

NO ONE SEES ME OR FEELS ME! GOT TO GET AWAY!

I WAS DRAWN AS IF BY A MAGNET OUT INTO THE NIGHT...

I, RAMA KUSHNA, SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSE, HAVE GIVEN YOU THE SPECIAL POWER TO RETURN AND BRING YOUR MURDERER TO JUSTICE!

THE "SPECIAL POWER" WAS THE ABILITY TO ENTER PEOPLES BODIES AND TAKE THEM OVER COMPLETELY...

SO HERE I AM... I'VE GONE FULL CIRCLE... BACK AT A CIRCUS ...NO CLOSER TO FINDING THE HOOK THAN BEFORE... IN AN EMPTY WORLD, WITHOUT FEELINGS!

LOOK AT THIS BIG LUG! SITTIN' WITH A GIRL PRETTY ENOUGH TO STEP OUT ON ANY CIRCUS PARADE! DOES **HE** FEEL LONELY?

NOT WHEN HE'S GOT A GIRL THAT DOESN'T MIND KISSIN' HIM IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE OF FIVE THOUSAND! WHY CAN'T I BE LIKE HIM? WHY MUST I WALK ALONE OR HANG AROUND LIKE A BEGGAR WAITIN' FOR A HANDOUT?

I RUTH, TAKE THEE PHIL, FOR MY LAWFULLY WEDDED HUSBAND! OHH, PHIL... THINK OF IT... IN JUST ONE WEEK MORE... WE'RE GOING TO BE MARRIED!

UNABLE TO ENDURE THE SHEER AGONY OF HIS LONELY, TORTURED QUEST ANY LONGER...

WHY NOT? WHY CAN'T I HAVE A NEW LIFE... INSTEAD OF A TWISTED DEATH!

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TOUCH THIS LUCKY GUY--

-- AND I CAN TAKE HIS PLACE!

SHORTLY...

AND WHEN HE EXITS WITH THE CROWD...

...DID I EVER TELL YOU THAT I LOVE YOU MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE ON EARTH? THAT I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU? THAT I WON'T BREATHE UNTIL WE'RE MARRIED? THAT NO ONE IS AS LUCKY AS I--?

NO ONE... BUT ME! I'M SO LUCKY TO HAVE YOU, I'M GROWING FOUR LEAF CLOVERS INSTEAD OF HAIR!

I'M FLYIN' HIGHER THAN HE IS... NOW!

ALL RIGHT, YOU, PUT THAT DOWN!

PRETTY NOISY... WONDER WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE?

LATER... AT A SUPPER CLUB...

WHEN WE'RE MARRIED, I'LL COOK YOUR FAVORITE DISH!

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE COOKED... YOU'RE JUST RIGHT ***NOW!***

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, DARLING?

THAT I'M NOT ALONE ANYMORE!

HOOK

WITH PRECISION-SPRING REFLEXES, DEADMAN LASHES OUT TO THE HAND THAT WIELDS THE SYMBOL OF HIS MISERY!

HOOK... HERE?

IT'S NOT **HIM**, JUST SOME BIRD WITH A BAILING HOOK!

BEATIN' UP ON A COP... THE CRUMBS!

HEY, LET GO, CREEP!

CATCH THIS... I WOULDN'T WANT TO DIRTY MY KNUCKLES ON YOUR PASTY FACE!

HEY, YOU... YOU'RE ASKIN' FOR TROU... **UH!**

HOLD IT, YOU! LET'S SEE HOW FAST YOU FOLD UP WHEN YOU'RE NOT JUMPING SOMEONE FROM BEHIND!

OUCH! I FELT THAT ONE OVER HERE!

WUMP

THANKS, MISTER! I WAS TAKING ONE OF THEM IN WHEN THE OTHER ONE JUMPED ME FROM BEHIND. I'D BE DEAD IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU!

I DON'T THINK SO, OFFICER! SOMEONE WOULD HAVE HELPED IF I HADN'T!

IN A BIG CITY LIKE THIS, FRIEND, IT TAKES SOMEBODY SPECIAL WHO'LL EVEN BOTHER TO HELP!

SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL AND WONDERFUL, AND... SOON TO BE MINE!

LATER, IN FRONT OF THE BEAUTIFUL YOUNG GIRL'S DOOR, HOLDING HER SO TIGHTLY THAT A SHADOW COULDN'T PASS BETWEEN THEM....

I'M NOT ALONE...

...NOT ALONE...

...NOT ALONE...

THAT NIGHT... DEADMAN TEMPORARILY LEAVES PHIL'S BODY...

LOOK AT HIM! SLEEPING PEACEFULLY AS A BABE! AND NO WONDER! HE'S GOT SWEET DREAMS! DREAMING OF A BEAUTIFUL DOLL WHO'S GONNA MARRY HIM NEXT WEEK!

I EARNED SOME OF THAT GIRL'S LOVE TONIGHT AND I LIKE THE REWARD I GOT A LOT BETTER THAN CHASING AROUND AFTER THE **HOOK!**

THE NEXT MORNING...

THERE'S SOMETHING TRYIN' TO PULL ME AWAY FROM PHIL! IT'S RAMA KUSHNA! TRYING TO SEND ME OUT LOOKING FOR A MAN WITH A HOOK AGAIN! BUT I'M NOT GONNA LET HIM TEAR ME AWAY FROM MY NEW LIFE!

AS THE CAR GLIDES TO A STOP...

THIS ISN'T RUTH'S APARTMENT HOUSE! WHO'S HE GONNA MEET HERE!

OH... HE'S PROBABLY PICKING UP THAT GUY LEAVING HIS WIFE AND KID AND GOING TO WORK! HE MUST BE A BUDDY OF PHIL'S! LOOK AT THE WAY HE'S KISSIN' HIS WIFE AND KID GOODBYE! IT'S KINDA NICE!

SUDDENLY DEADMAN IS UNABLE TO RESIST THE BITTER TRUTH TEARING AT HIS HAUNTED HEART...

AAAA-- WHAT'S THE USE! WHO'M I KIDDING? I CAN'T STEAL AWAY ANOTHER MAN'S LIFE! I'M A DEADMAN! AND I'VE GOTTA GO BACK TO HUNTING MY KILLER!

KLIK!

MY TIME IS OVER...THE ONLY JOB LEFT IS TO FIND THE HOOK AND BRING HIM TO JUSTICE! THEN THIS MAD TORMENT WILL STO...

NO!...

NO?

K-POW POW

NO!

NO!

NO!

HE *KILLED* HIM--JUST LIKE THAT!! THE MAN WHOSE LIFE I WANTED TO LIVE... *IS A KILLER...*

NO BETTER THAN THE HOOK!

LOOK AT HIM! AS CALM AS IF HE WAS CRACKIN' THE SHELL OF A SOFT-BOILED EGG! NOT AS IF HE HAD JUST TRIGGERED A MAN IN COLD BLOOD!

I'D LIKE TO ROLL YOU INTO A BALL AND THROW YOU INTO THE NEAREST POLICE STATION... BUT IT WOULD BE A WASTE OF TIME! ***I'M*** THE ONLY WITNESS! BUT I'LL ***TRAP*** YOU SOMEHOW! YOU'RE NOT GONNA MARRY THAT LITTLE DOLL, RUTH! SHE DOESN'T KNOW SHE LOVES A MAN WHO HAS NAILS FOR EYES AND SPEAKS WITH A GUN!

THE SEEMINGLY NERVELESS KILLER DRIVES TO GRAND CENTRAL STATION...

PHIL PARKED HIS CAR AND CAME INTO THE STATION! WONDER WHAT HE'S UP TO NOW?

TO TRAINS

HE CAN'T'VE COME HERE JUST TO USE THE RAILROAD STATION WAITING ROOM AS A READING ROOM?

THERE'S YOUR DOUGH FOR THE *HIT*, PHIL! YOU TOOK YOUR TIME GETTIN' HERE, MY TRAIN IS READY TO LEAVE!

WA RO

"*HIT'S*" KILLER TALK FOR BUMPING OFF SOMEONE! PHIL'S A **PROFESSIONAL KILLER!**

THAT "MARK" YOU TOOK CARE OF THIS MORNING WILL TEACH OTHERS THAT WHEN THE "ORGANIZATION" WANTS A 50% CUT OF A SUCKER'S BUSINESS... *IT* MEANS BUSINESS!

IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME WHO THE MARK IS... AS LONG AS I GET PAID! I'LL TAKE ON MORE CONTRACTS BECAUSE I'M GOING TO BE A MARRIED MAN IN A WEEK AND MY EXPENSES ARE GOING TO BE DOUBLE! HEY, YOUR TRAIN'S LEAVING!

I'M SORRY, SIR, THE TRAIN IS LEAVING!

WE CAN CATCH IT! *LET US THROUGH!*

I'M SORRY...

IRENE!

KRAK

WISH I COULD SPLIT IN TWO, AND TAG AFTER THAT PAIR, BUT PHIL GETS FIRST PRIORITY!

REMEMBER, PHIL, SEVEN O'CLOCK TONIGHT, ENGLE CLIFF RIDGE!

LATER THAT AFTERNOON...

THERE SHE IS! JUST OUT OF HER BALLET CLASS AND SO ANXIOUS TO SEE HIM... I CAN TASTE IT!

TIME TO ENTER HIS BODY...

EACH WITH THEIR OWN REASON FOR SILENCE WATCH THE PASSING SCENERY AND WHEN SILENCE IS NO LONGER BEARABLE...

OH, PHIL, I COUNT THE MINUTES UNTIL I SEE YOU! WAITING FOR OUR MARRIAGE DATE IS BECOMING UNBEARABLE!

I'VE GOTTA STOP IT... OR THE DOLL'LL SPEND HER HONEYMOON PINING AFTER PHIL WHEN HE'S IN THE DEATH HOUSE!

DEADMAN FORCES IRON RUST INTO HIS VOICE...

THIS IS THE KISS-OFF, BABY! I NEVER INTENDED MARRYING YOU! I JUST WENT ALONG FOR THE RIDE! AND THE RIDE IS OVER! I MET ANOTHER DOLL THAT WON'T STRANGLE A GUY WITH A WEDDING RING! AND SHE'S FOR ME!

YOU CAN'T MEAN WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, PHIL! YOU'RE JUST SAYING THAT TO SHAKE ME UP! YOU LOVE ME! I KNOW YOU DO! NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY!

KRASH

THE TORMENTED GIRL FLEES FROM THE CAR AS...

WE'RE THROUGH! FINISHED! FIN!! KAPUT! FIND YOURSELF ANOTHER SUCKER FOR ORANGE BLOSSOMS, KID!

ENGLE CLIFF RIDGE

YOU'RE TEARIN' MY HEART OUT! I WON'T LISTEN... I CAN'T LISTEN ANY LONGER!

EEEEEEEEEE

THROUGH HIS WINDSHIELD, DEADMAN IS HORRIFIED TO SEE...

RUTH'S RUNNING BLINDLY INTO THE PATH OF THAT TRUCK! DRIVER CAN'T SEE HER WITH THAT DARK BALLET COSTUME...

GOT TO DO SOMETHING!

INSTANTLY, DEADMAN GUNS HIS CAR AT THE ONRUSHING JUGGERNAUT...

THAT TRUCK'LL NEVER STOP IN TIME! I'VE GOT TO RAM IT AWAY FROM HER!

SCREVROOM

HEAD OVER HEELS, DEADMAN HURTLES THROUGH THE AIR... AND A SPLIT SECOND BEFORE HE SMASHES HEAD FIRST AGAINST THE GROUND... HIS STEEL-MUSCLED FINGERS SPREAD OUT AND...

GOT TO BRACE MYSELF... NOW!

SKRASH

OOOCH! GONNA BE BLACK AND BL... RUTH!

PHIL...OH, PHIL!

AS RUTH TURNS, THE ON-RUSHING RABBIT UNDER THE GAZE OF A HEADLIGHTS TRANSFIX HER LIKE A RATTLESNAKE...

GOT NO CAR TO BLOCK FOR HER... GOTTA DO SOMETHING... MAYBE...

ACROSS THE NARROW GULF THAT SEPARATES THEM DEADMAN HURLS HIS EERIE FORM INTO THE BODY OF HIS IMPOSSIBLE LOVE...

AND...

THEN, AS THE EERIE AERIALIST DEPARTS FROM RUTH'S BODY...

FAINTED... HUH! DELAYED REACTION, I GUESS... IF ONLY I WERE SOLID ENOUGH TO CRADLE HER IN MY ARMS AND TAKE HER AWAY FROM HERE!

CHARLIE, STAY WITH THE TRUCK!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOIN' *HERE NOW!* AND THAT *GIRL IS MY GIRL, RUTH!*

PHIL! WHAT THE *BLAZES* ARE YOU DOING *HERE* NOW? YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE HERE 'TIL LATER! AND WHO'S THE GIRL?

AND YOU ALMOST *KILLED HER*... YOU *FAT, BLIND SLOB!!*

SHE FAINTED, BUT SHE'S ALL RIGHT, NO THANKS TO YOU! THIS MEETING BETTER BE IMPORTANT!

OH, IT IS, PHIL BABY... IT'S GONNA *MAKE* YOUR WHOLE FUTURE! PUT HER DOWN!

HEY, WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO PULL?

MY, MY... PHIL, YOU MAKE EVERY-THING SOUND SO HOSTILE! WE JUST WANT TO SHOW YOU WHAT'S IN THE TRUCK!

WE HAVE A DELIVERY TO MAKE, PHIL! YOU'RE GONNA DUMP THIS PIGEON OFF THE CLIFF FOR US!

IS THAT ALL! YOU DON'T NEED TO HOLD A GUN ON ME JUST TO HAVE ME DUMP A PIGEON!

OH, WE KNOW HOW YOU LOVE YOUR WORK, PHIL BABY, BUT YOU MIGHT NOT LIKE WHAT WE PLAN FOR YOU AFTERWARD!

YOU'RE BECOMING A DANGER TO THE ORGANIZATION! WANTING TO GET MARRIED! NEEDING MORE DOUGH FOR A SIMPLE "HIT"!

SO... AFTER YOU DUMP THE CAR, PHIL... WE ***DUMP YOU!*** NOW THAT YOU'VE GOTTEN YOUR FINGER-PRINTS ALL OVER THE CAR!

I'VE GOT TO MOVE!

SOK!

SUDDENLY, THE GRINDING OF GRAVEL UNDER TIRE WHEELS CATCHES DEADMAN'S ATTENTION...

STUPID... YOU SHOULD HAVE HELD ON TO THAT GUN!

THE CAR! IT'S GOIN' OVER THE SIDE OF THE CLIFF! NO!

GOT TO LEAVE PHIL TO HIS OWN DEVICES! THAT GUY'S GONNA BE SPLATTERED ALL OVER THE LANDSCAPE!

THEN, AS THE CAR MAKES ITS FIRST BOUNCE ONE HUNDRED FEET BELOW THE CLIFF'S RIM...

CRASH

BEAUTIFUL! LIKE A FLOWER IN BLOOM...

GOT TO CLIMB BACK UP, WHICH WON'T BE EASY WITH THIS CRUMMY, OUTTA-SHAPE BODY!

AS DEADMAN DRAGS THE TREMBLING BODY HE NOW POSSESSES TO THE TOP OF THE CLIFF!

UH-OH, GOTTA STOP THAT! HE'LL GET HIS... BUT MY WAY!

JUST AS DEADMAN ENTERS PHIL'S BODY...

UH! SHE HITS LIKE A PILE DRIVER! IT'S AGAINST MY PRINCIPLES TO STRIKE A WOMAN, BUT I'M GONNA HAVE TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION!

WOK

OOUCH!! SHE HARDLY BLINKED! HOW DO I FIGHT A ROCK-HARD WOMAN!

SOK

AGGG, DIDN'T MOVE IN TIME! LOOKS LIKE SHE'S GONNA DO ALL THE FIGHTING!

UH! SHE'S... TOO GOOD... TOO STRONG... GOTTA STOP HER SOMEHOW! SHE'LL KILL PHIL!...

OHHHHH... CAN'T STAND... THE PAIN! MOVING IN FOR THE KILL...

IF I CAN JUST MANEUVER...

OW!

KLANK

THAT SHOULD STOP HER FOR AWHILE, UH-OH... THE HOOD FROM THE TRUCK... I'LL ENTER HIS BODY AND HOLD THE REST FOR THE POLICE!

BLAM BLAM BLAM

WHA... WHO?

BLAM

BLAM

PHIL... WHAT... NO! PUT DOWN THAT GUN! NO! NO! YOU DIRTY KILLER!

AS LIFE FADES FROM THE GANGSTER AND HIS FEMALE ASSISTANT... POLICE CARS PULL UP...

ALL RIGHT! YOU WITH THE GUN, DROP IT!

POLICE

NOT HIM, OFFICER! HE SAVED MY LIFE! THOSE OTHER PEOPLE ARE THE KILLERS!

OH, NO! HE'S A HERO! A BLOODY HERO! I'LL NEVER STOP HIM NOW!

THAT'S RIGHT, OFFICER! MY FIANCÉ SAVED MY LIFE AND SHOT THOSE KILLERS...

THE KILLERS TRIED TO FORCE HIM TO KILL ME, BUT HE TURNED ON THEM!...

FRUSTRATED, DEADMAN RETURNS TO TOWN. A POSTER OUTSIDE A THEATRE DRAWS HIS ATTENTION, AND NOT BELIEVING HIS GOOD LUCK, HE RUSHES TO A BACKSTAGE DRESSING ROOM WHERE...

AMES THE MAN OF 1,000,000 FACES

THIS IS THE FATHER OF PHIL'S LAST "HIT"! HE BILLS HIMSELF AS THE MAN OF A MILLION FACES!

UH-OH! I BET THE AUDIENCE NEVER GETS TO SEE THE FACE HE HAS ON NOW!

MY SON... MY SON! NONE OF M-MY MILLION FACES ARE ENOUGH TO HIDE MY TEARS FOR YOU!

WH-WHAT CAN I DO TO AVENGE YOUR DEATH?

MAYBE YOU CAN HAUNT A KILLER, MR. AMES!

AND I'M GONNA BORROW YOUR BODY TO DO IT!

WITH THE HELP OF THIS MAKE-UP KIT... AND THE VICTIM'S PICTURE... I'LL MAKE MYSELF UP TO LOOK EXACTLY LIKE THE MURDERED MAN!

I'M A DEAD MAN STANDING IN THE SHOES OF A DEAD MAN! THAT MAKES ME TWICE DEAD!

BUT NOW... I LOOK ALIVE! AND THAT'S WHAT I'M GONNA BE TO HAUNT A KILLER!

DEADMAN HAUNTS THE VICINITY OF RUTH'S APARTMENT HOUSE UNTIL...

PHIL... WHAT IS IT?

I--I THOUGHT I SAW SOMEONE I KNEW! BUT I MUST BE MISTAKEN!

LATER THAT DAY...

YOU--?!

PHIL... WHAT...?

HE CAME OUT TO SEE IF HE COULD FIND ME! MY FACE IS HAUNTING HIM... LIKE THE HOOK'S HAUNTS ME!

AT EVERY POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY DEADMAN FLASHES HIS RESURRECTED FACE BEFORE THE EYES OF THE NOW "HAUNTED KILLER"!

AND THEN ONE SLEEPLESS NIGHT... AFTER A WEEK OF RELENTLESS HAUNTING...

THE KILLER'S SLEEPING IN HIS CLOTHES... AS IF HE EXPECTS A VISIT FROM A NIGHTMARE! WELL... IT'S TIME TO LET HIM KNOW THAT THE BAD DREAM IS HERE!

TAP TAP

I WAS WAITING FOR YOU!

POW

CRASH! TINKLE TINKLE

WHOOPS!

BEEOW BEEOW

NO PIGEON I EVER KILLED... CAME BACK!

BANG

BLAM BLAM

SAY SOMETHING... SAY SOMETHING! DON'T JUST FADE AWAY LIKE A GHOST!

OWWWW... MY ANKLE!

LEAD'LL **STOP YOU!** HOT LEAD SPLITTING YOUR HEART WIDE OPEN!

YOU'RE FINISHED, PIGEON, FINISHED!

WHREEEEE

YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT THIS TIME, PHIL! THAT SIREN MEANS THE COPS ARE ON THEIR WAY!

YOU'LL NEVER KNOW, PIGEON, 'CAUSE YOU'VE JUST BREATHED YOUR **LAST!**

IF I CAN JUST RELEASE THE CATCH... AH...

AAGGGG... **PIGEONS! GET AWAY! GET AWAY!**

BLASTED PIGEONS... **PIGEONS...** EVERY PIGEON I EVER BLASTED... **GET AWAY!**

BLAM BLAM

HYAAA!

I KILLED YOU! I KILLED YOU ALL, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I HAD TO KILL FRED AMES AGAIN... TO GET SOME SLEEP... HIS FACE WAS ALL AROUND... PIGEONS ALL AROUND! **PIGEONS! HA! HA! HA!**

MOMENTS LATER...

I'M FRED AMES' FATHER! I'M AN ACTOR! I IMPERSONATED MY POOR MURDERED BOY, SO I COULD FORCE A CONFESSION FROM HIS KILLER...

WELL, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH YOU'VE SUCCEEDED!

YES, SIR!

OFFICER, TAKE THIS MAN TO THE STATION WHILE I GET A STATEMENT FROM MR. AMES!

HE HAS A FIANCÉ WHO WILL TAKE THIS RATHER HARD! I HOPE...

BLAM

WHAT THE BLAZES!

THAT OFFICER, HE SHOT YOUR SON'S MURDERER! AND LOOK, HE LEFT HIS EQUIPMENT!

HE WASN'T A COP! IT WAS SOME KIND OF DISGUISE! BUT WHY? WHY?

I CAN'T FIGURE IT, BUT IT'S A PROFESSIONAL JOB! FANTASTIC!

YES... FANTASTIC... BUT WHY?... AND HOW?!

WHY? HOW? THE STARTLING ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL BLOW YOUR MIND, WHEN DEADMAN MEETS THE HOOK FACE-TO-FACE IN A YARN CALLED...

"A NEW LEASE ON DEATH!"

IN THE NEXT EXCITING CHAPTER OF... DEADMAN!

DEADMAN

YOU SHALL LIVE IN THE BODIES OF OTHERS AND WALK AMONG MEN UNTIL YOU HAVE FOUND YOUR KILLER!

PHIL CARLING, PROFESSIONAL KILLER, LIES DEAD AT YOUR FEET, **DEADMAN.** YOU PURSUED AND TRICKED HIM INTO CONFESSING HIS CRIME. HE WASN'T HOOK, BUT HE DESERVED CATCHING AND PUNISHMENT... BUT AT THE HANDS OF **JUSTICE...NOT** AT THE HANDS OF ANOTHER ASSASSIN!

WHAT KIND OF WORLD HAVE YOU ALLOWED ME TO EXIST IN, RAMA KUSHNA? IS THIS THE WORLD I LEFT? A WORLD OF ASSASINATION AND MURDER, JEALOUSIES AND INTRIGUES!

AND **HOOK!**... HE'S JUST **ONE** KILLER IN A **WORLD OF KILLERS**... A LOUSY DROP IN THE BUCKET! I CATCH ONE MURDERER AND ANOTHER **KILLS HIM!**

NEAL ADAMS ART & STORY

SURE HE **DESERVED** IT! PHIL WAS A KILLER! I SAW HIM MURDER A MAN, AND I HAUNTED HIM INTO A CONFESSION!

BUT THE COP THAT LED HIM AWAY **PLUGGED** HIM!

ONLY IT WASN'T A COP! HE WORE A DISGUISE... THAT HE PEELED OFF WHEN HE MADE HIS GETAWAY!

SO NOW, DEADMAN, YOU HAVE YET **ANOTHER** KILLER TO SEEK OUT...

WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

KLINK!

THERE! A NIGHTSTICK!

NO COP WOULD THROW AWAY HIS NIGHTSTICK!

MUST BE THE LAST OF THE KILLER'S DISGUISE...

THERE HE GOES!

CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK

NOW HE HAS A FACE...

HEY! COOL IT, KILLER! **I'M** HERE! THERE'S A DEADMAN WATCHING OVER YOU!

YOU FOLLOW YOUR QUARRY TO THE AIRPORT! LET HIM GO... INTERNATIONAL BOUNDRIES ARE NO BARRIER TO YOU, DEADMAN!

NOW THE FACE HAS A NAME! WILLIE SMITH... **HA!** SURRE IT IS... GOING TO HONG KONG, WILLIE? THAT'S A **LONG** COMMUTE!

HONG KONG... SOMEHOW THAT FIGURES!

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I PLAYED HONG KONG! I'VE DEVELOPED A NEW TALENT SINCE THEN! 'BOUT TIME TO MAKE USE OF IT!

NICE OVERWEIGHT TYPE NEXT TO WILLIE, DEADMAN... DO YOUR THING!

LIKE SLIPPIN' INTO A SHOE!

NICE FLYIN' WEATHER, FRIEND!

MY NAME'S DOBBS-- HOMER DOBBS! I'M IN FARM MACHINERY! WHAT'S YOUR LINE?

MY LINE?... I'M AN EXTERMINATOR... YOU KNOW... **PESTS** AND THINGS!

OH!

HALF A DAY AND TWO PLANE CHANGES LATER...

ONE THING ABOUT HIRED KILLERS, THEY DON'T TALK A WHOLE LOT!

HONG KONG AT LAST! MY FRIEND HASN'T SPOKEN SINCE HE SPILLED HIS HOT COFFEE ON ME WHEN I ASKED HIM WHAT HIS LAST EXTERMINATING JOB WAS!

THEY DON'T WASTE A WHOLE LOT OF TIME, EITHER! ONCE WILLIE GETS THROUGH CUSTOMS, HE MAKES A BEELINE FOR...

... A CRUMBY LITTLE OLD CURIO SHOP! WHAT KIND OF BUSINESS COULD HE HAVE HERE? HIS CLIENT, MAYBE?

THIS IS BEGINNING TO SMELL LIKE AN "I SPY" STORY, AND ME WITHOUT A SCRIPT!

A GLANCE OF RECOGNITION IS THE ONLY COMMUNICATION THAT PASSES BETWEEN THE SHOP OWNER AND THE ASSASSIN.., THEN...

AN EXCHANGE OF SUITCASES... AND A NOTE... CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER!

EVENING DESCENDS AND WILLIE'S SURROUNDINGS ALTER...

COULDN'T FIGURE OUT THE CODE ON THAT NOTE BEFORE HE SWALLOWED IT! SHEESH! I DIDN'T THINK ANYBODY SWALLOWED NOTES ANYMORE! IF IT TOLD HIM TO BED DOWN HERE, SOMEBODY'S GOT GREAT TASTE!

UH-OH! I THINK I KNOW WHAT WAS IN THAT NOTE... A **NEW ASSIGNMENT!** ONLY THIS TIME HE'LL FAIL! **I'LL SEE TO THAT!**

NOW, **THIS** IS MORE LIKE THE KIND OF NEIGHBORHOOD THIS CREEP IS SUITED TO!... BUT WHO'S **IMPORTANT ENOUGH** TO KILL HERE?

FOR HOURS WILLIE WANDERS THROUGH THE GIN-MILLS THAT SCAR THE HONG KONG WATERFRONT...

'ERE Y'GO, HOOK!

HOOK!!

HOOK?

HOOK! AWK

THAT WAS ALWAYS YOUR WEAKNESS, WILLIE, YOUR BIG MOUTH!

THERE'S A BULLET COMIN' BEHIND THAT STOOL!

SKRASH

THWUNK

HOOK SLIPS OUT OF HIS JACKET...

OUT OF THE WAY, OLD MAN!

SWINE!

A FUTILE GESTURE, DEADMAN... AND A HUNDRED YARDS DOWN THE WHARF FUTILITY WAITS AGAIN...

GUESS YOU WEREN'T READY FOR THAT, WILLIE! HERE'S WHERE I TAKE OVER! I'M FINALLY GOING TO GET THE HOOK!

THEN...

MY MISTAKE! LOOKS LIKE HE **WAS** READY FOR **THAT!** VERY PROFESSIONAL, WILLIE!

SOON, HOOK AGAIN FEELS THE HOT **BREATH OF PURSUIT!** YOUR ONLY REGRET, DEADMAN, IS HE IS ONLY AWARE OF "WILLIE SMITH," NOT OF **YOU,** HIS LONG-DEAD VICTIM!

WILLIE IS GAINING ON THE TURNS, BUT IF HOOK MAKES OPEN WATER, HIS BOAT'S MORE POWERFUL ENGINES WILL CARRY HIM TO SAFETY...

OPEN WATER! WILLIE'LL NEVER CATCH HIM NOW!

I'D BETTER DEAL MYSELF A HAND IN THIS GAME!

SNAP

WAIT-A-MINUTE! WHAT'S 'OL' WILLIE TAKIN' FROM UNDER THAT CANVAS?

IT LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND A ROCKET LAUNCH...

WHOOOOSH

...ER...

LIKE DOOM STREAKING HOME, THE CURIOUS ROCKET FINDS ITS MARK...

BARON

SCANT MOMENTS LATER, WILLIE PULLS HIS SMALL BOAT ALONGSIDE A GASPING FIGURE...

COUGH COUGH

LIKE I SAID, WILLIE... VERY PROFESSIONAL!

AS THE HARBOR PATROL SURGES TOWARD THE SMOLDERING REMAINS OF HOOK'S BOAT, WILLIE, WITH HOOK ABOARD, DARTS BACK INTO THE JUNK-CLOGGED HARBOR...

Can VENGEANCE be so HOLLOW?

THERE IS AN UNREAL QUALITY TO THE COUNTRY-SIDE IN THE MORNING AIR... OR IS IT PERHAPS THE HEADINESS YOU FEEL, DEADMAN, NOW THAT HOOK IS WITHIN YOUR GRASP? BUT **WHAT** DOES WILLIE HAVE PLANNED FOR HIM?...

YOU WERE A FOOL TO THINK YOU COULD HIDE FROM US, **HOOK!** AND IN, OF ALL PLACES, HONG KONG! THAT'S PRACTICALLY THE BACKYARD OF THE SOCIETY!

CLIMB OFF MY BACK, WILLIE! I WAS GOING TO REPORT AT **THE GUARDIAN**... WHEN I FINISHED MY JOB...

HA HA HA HA HA

SOMEHOW YOU MUST FIND OUT **WHY** HE KILLED YOU AND HOW YOU WILL BRING HIM TO JUSTICE... **FINAL** AND **SURE** JUSTICE!

THE "GUARDIAN"? THE "SOCIETY"?

IF YOU COULD BREATHE THE AIR, DEADMAN, YOU WOULD NOTICE ITS CRISPNESS AND FRESHNESS AS WILLIE DRIVES HIGHER AND HIGHER...

THAT MUST BE OUR DESTINATION? MUST'VE BEEN A HEARTY GROUP OF WORSHIPERS WHO WERE ONCE WILLING TO CLIMB THIS HIGH!

...LOOKS DESERTED NOW...

THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE IS GLOOMY ENOUGH TO MAKE A TOMB SEEM CHEERFUL...

THIS MUST BE THE "GUARDIAN"... ORIGINALLY CHARGED WITH GUARDING BUDDHISM... BUT NOW IT GUARDS SOMETHING A BIT NASTIER...

WHAT'S HE DOING WITH THAT LATTICE-WORK?

CA-RIPES! HE ACTIVATED A TRAP DOOR!

STRANGE SENSATION! GRAVITY DOESN'T AFFECT ME, SO I DON'T FALL WHEN I SHOULD!

THE TRAP DOOR SLAMS SHUT, BUT NOTHING SO TRIVIAL CAN STOP A DEADMAN!

SOME KIND OF SLIDE GOING DOWN INTO THE "BOWELS OF THE EARTH"! OR AT LEAST A COUPLE A HUNDRED FEET! GOTTA CATCH UP TO HOOK!

HOOK HAD TO COME OUT HERE... UH-OH, ARMED GUARD... AND LOOK AT THAT GUN!

LOOK, INSTEAD, AT THE FANTASTIC MACHINES OF DESTRUCTION THAT LINE THE PASSAGEWAY, DEADMAN...

SCIENCE FICTION WEAPONRY!... ARE THEY **REAL** OR IS THIS SOME KIND OF GIGANTIC PUT-ON?

WHAT KIND OF CRAZY, COCKEYED DEN OR ROTTENNESS HAVE I STUMBLED INTO?...

THERE'S **HOOK**... SURROUNDED BY THAT GROUP OF CUTTHROATS!

THE ACCUSED IS TO BE BROUGHT FORTH!

IT'S A MEETING... OF **KILLERS!**... **ASSASSINS!** EVERY ONE OF THEM!

THE **OLD GUY** FROM THE **ANTIQUE** SHOP... **HE'S** THE **BOSS!!!**

THE ***SOCIETY*** HAS ALWAYS EXISTED AND WILL EXIST WHEN WE ARE ALL GONE! ***IT***-- NOT ***YOU*** OR ***I***-- HAS IMPORTANCE! NO ONE OF US HAS FAILED OUR SACRED CALLING-- THE SUBLIME ART-- ***DEATH!***--***DEATH*** BY THE HAND OF THE ASSASSIN!

HOOK, MY STUDENT... YOU ARE CHARGED WITH FAILURE... *FAILURE IN THE KILLING OF ONE BOSTON BRAND!* TRUE OR FALSE?

I...I...

ARE MY LESSONS SO QUICKLY FORGOTTEN, STUDENT? *ANSWER!*

YEAH, *WHY?*

I SAW HIS NAME ON A... CIRCUS POSTER... THOUGHT HE'D BE A PERFECT TEST... OF MARKS-MANSHIP... NERVE... SURROUNDED BY A BIG CROWD...

NO... SENSEI...

I MEAN... YES! IT WAS MY GRADUATION MISSION...

SENSEI? THAT MEANS *TEACHER!*

YES, THE RECORD SO SHOWS! TO GRADUATE INTO THE *SOCIETY OF ASSASSINS* YOU MUST PICK A VICTIM AND KILL HIM CLEANLY! WHY DID YOU PICK THIS BOSTON BRAND?

NO! NO! ***NO!***

IT *CAN'T* BE... HE *CAN'T* HAVE JUST PICKED ME OFF A POSTER... AND KILLED ME FOR A WARPED GRADUATION TEST! *NO! I WON'T BELIEVE IT!*

BUT YOU **FAILED** YOUR TEST! BOSTON BRAND STILL LIVES -- STILL DEFIES DEATH AS A CIRCUS PERFORMER...!

YES, SENSEI... BUT I WENT BACK TO KILL HIM AGAIN!

AND YOU FAILED **AGAIN**, THE RECORD SO SHOWS!

HA! IT WAS **MY BROTHER**, CLEVE WHO TOOK MY PLACE AND **TINY** HE FAILED TO KILL! AND NOW HE'S ON TRIAL FOR **FAILING** TO KILL ME!

BUT HE SUCCEEDED, **YOU FOOLS!!... I'M DEAD!** THAT'S WHY HE **MUST** BE PUNISHED! **BECAUSE HE SUCCEEDED!**

TWICE YOU FAILED YOUR CALLING, STUDENT! YOU **KNOW** YOUR FATE...

YES... I KNOW... **LIQUIDATION**!

HOOK...

...MOVE IT, MAN!... WE'RE BLASTING OUT OF HERE!

WHAT... **NO!** HE'S **NOT** GONNA DIE FOR THE WRONG REASON! **YOU CAN'T CHEAT ME OF MY REVENGE!**

WILLIE, YOU'RE GONNA HELP ME, LIKE IT OR NOT!

SILENCE HIM!

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT YOU'RE IN A ROOM FULL OF ASSASSINS, DEADMAN?

WHAK

BRAT-TAT

WITH HARDLY A BACKWARD GLANCE AT YOUR ABORTED RESISTANCE, THE WRINKLED OLD SENSEI TURNS TOWARD THE CONDEMNED HOOK! BETTER GET OUT OF THAT BATTERED BODY FAST, DEADMAN!

IT IS A GREAT DISHONOR TO ME PERSONALLY THAT YOU, HOOK, OF ALL, SHOULD FAIL SO MISERABLY! AS MY PROTÉGÉ YOU WERE THE BEST TRAINED AND MOST TALENTED...

ARRGH!

... BECAUSE OF THIS, I WILL CARRY OUT THE EXECUTION! IT IS ONLY FITTING!

THANK YOU, SENSEI!

VERY WELL, DEFEND YOURSELF!

AS YOU TRY TO REGAIN YOUR WITS, YOU SEE THE OLD MAN SLASH AT HOOK LIKE A SCYTHE AT SUMMER WHEAT!

YOU ARE SLOW, STUDENT!

SHUNK

YOU SHAME ME, HOOK! DEFEND YOURSELF WITH MORE HONOR!

GOTTA STOP THIS!

CHONK

ALL RIGHT, OLD MAN. YOU WANTED A FIGHT, YOU'LL GET IT!

HAH

THIS OUGHT TO PLEASE YOU, TEACH.... ACCCCHH!

LIKE A COILED SNAKE, THE "TEACHER" SLASHES AT YOU!

WHOOMP

HII!

HII! YA!

YOU BRING SHAME TO YOUR TRAINING! I WILL END THIS QUICKLY SO THAT YOUR HONOR SHALL SUFFER NO LONGER!

UGGH... HE'S GONNA DROP ME... WOULDN'T'A BELIEVED IT... GOTTA DO SOMETHING...

ONE CHOICE! IF I CAN ENTER HIS BODY...

THEN... FOR THE FIRST TIME...

AGGG... WHAT'S GOIN' ON? I... I... **CAN'T** ENTER HIS BODY! IT... IT'S LIKE **HITTING A WALL!** HE'S FROZEN BUT **I... CAN'T GET... IN!...**

THEN, AS IF YOUR STRENGTH IS SUDDENLY DRAINED, YOU FALL AWAY FROM THE SENSEI... AND, FREE ONCE MORE, HE DELIVERS THE **DEATH BLOW** TO THE **HOOK!**

HOOK IS NO MORE, BUT A FAR GREATER DANGER IS PRESENT **HERE!** EVERYONE LEAVE... **NOW...** WITHOUT **DELAY!!**

BY THE TIME YOU REGAIN YOUR COMPOSURE, DEADMAN, THE HALL HAS EMPTIED, AND YOU'RE LEFT WITH YOUR DEAD QUARRY! YOU WANTED HIM, YOU HAVE HIM... WHY SO DOWN IN THE MOUTH?

I... I WANTED HIM! BUT NOT... LIKE THIS... THERE'S NO JUSTICE THIS WAY! I NEVER DREAMED IT WOULD END LIKE... IT'S **ALMOST...** FUNNY! HA... SILLY... **HA HA!**

HA HA HA

WELL, *IS* IT ?

SPEAK TO ME--- DO YOU HEAR ME ? **SPEAK TO ME!!**

END PART 1

DEADMAN

...LIKE FAST!

GOTTA GET TO HER...

OR SHE'LL BE MURDERED...

...BY THE MAN SHE LOVES!